

**The Story that Makes Sense of Everything**  
**Part 2 of 5**  
**Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020**  
**The Two Trees**

LEADER NOTES: Hi LifeGroup leaders! Welcome to part 2 of “The Story that Makes Sense of Everything”. The goal of this series is that we would understand the metanarrative (overarching story) of the Bible. The more we understand His story, the more we are able to make choices and act in ways that align our story with His. This week we’re looking at the story of Genesis 3 as an archetype for how we experience all of life. We can either live in a trusting relationship with God or we can make up the rules ourselves. The goal of this study is that we would experience the peace that comes with surrendering to God. Life was meant to be lived with God.

SLIDE 1

**The Story that Makes Sense of Everything**  
**Part 2 of 5**  
**Two Trees**

To kick off your study time, remind the group of the goal of this series, to better understand the metanarrative (overarching story) of the Bible. Then ask the group, “What was a highlight for you from Pete’s sermon on Sunday?” To probe further, you could ask, “Was there anything from the sermon that you learned, enjoyed or that moved you? Anything you disagreed with or left you with questions?”

SLIDE 2

**Question -**

**Tell us a story about when you thought you were right and turned out to be oh so wrong.**

This one might work best if you go first! 😊 Tips: Give the group a time boundary. Tell them you’re looking for short stories here, 2 minutes or less to share. These can be funny stories. They can also be about serious errors in judgment. But the ideal here is that these stories would be on the lighter side.

### SLIDE 3

<sup>1</sup>The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day he asked the woman, “Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?”

<sup>2</sup>“Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,” the woman replied. <sup>3</sup>“It’s only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, ‘You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.’”

<sup>4</sup>“You won’t die!” the serpent replied to the woman. <sup>5</sup>“God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.”

<sup>6</sup>The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it.

**Genesis 3:1-6**

Ask someone in your group to read these verses aloud to the group. The next three slides then have questions that relate to this passage.

### SLIDE 4

**Question – In this short story (Genesis 3) we see how quickly the serpent character is able to get the woman to distrust God. When do you find you are most tempted to distrust God?**

In Genesis 3, the woman began to distrust God’s words. Satan says, “You won’t die.” In other words, “What God has said to you is wrong. His words can’t be trusted.” What words of God are you struggling to trust or follow these days? For example, Jesus says, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” Matthew 16:24. It can be tough to trust that denying myself daily is actually the best pathway to take! A common answer your group members may have for this question is that is hard to trust God when our circumstances are bleak. The Psalms can be particularly helpful to restore our trust and keep us on track. For example, Psalm 56:3-4 says, “When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise— in God I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?”

### SLIDE 5

**Question - What is the thing you have the most difficulty relinquishing control of in your life? Or, what do you have the most difficulty waiting on God for?**

Adam and Eve's decision to eat the fruit in the garden was an attempt to grab control for themselves. In many ways this is our minute by minute temptation. To seize control of our lives instead of yielding control of our lives to God and patiently waiting for his leading. Control areas we struggle with relinquishing could include control of my time, control of managing outcomes, control of what others do or say, control of my finances. During this COVID-19 lockdown, it can be tough to give up control of our freedom to travel and interact. It can be tough to wait on God's involvement in times of difficulty.

## SLIDE 6

**Question - Can you think of a time when you trusted God even though it was uncomfortable? What advice would you give to someone faced with a similar situation?**

Trusting in God even though it's uncomfortable can mean we wait for God's involvement in a situation where we want Him to act now, we trust Him even though He seems to be silent, we praise Him in our storm. Advice we could give might be, "Don't give up. Keep seeking God. Pray and read the Scriptures. Don't walk alone. Invite others to journey with you."

## SLIDE 7

**The writer of Proverbs uses similar imagery to that of the Garden of Eden story in capturing what temptation looks like. Read Proverbs 9:13-18 with this in mind. Can you relate to this image of something looking appealing or fulfilling and yet being the exact opposite?**

Proverbs 9:13-18 New International Version (NIV)

<sup>13</sup> Folly is an unruly woman;

she is simple and knows nothing.

<sup>14</sup> She sits at the door of her house,

on a seat at the highest point of the city,

<sup>15</sup> calling out to those who pass by,

who go straight on their way,

<sup>16</sup> "Let all who are simple come to my house!"

To those who have no sense she says,

<sup>17</sup> “Stolen water is sweet;  
food eaten in secret is delicious!”

<sup>18</sup> But little do they know that the dead are there,  
that her guests are deep in the realm of the dead.

In this passage, folly, or foolishness, is personified as an unruly woman, calling out to men passing by, inviting them to have sex. She makes her pitch but the Proverb ends with this warning – those who have taken her up on her offer have ended up dead. James talks about a similar process in James 1:14-15. The enticement and desire James talks bring to mind images of an animal trap that drags away, or a sparkling lure that hooks a fish. The bait in the trap looks wonderful. The sparkling lure looks inviting. But they both lead to death. The Bible has ample warnings about what temptation can do to ruin our life if we pursue it.

## SLIDE 8

### PRAYER

'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
**And lead us not into temptation, (pause for 1 minute)  
but deliver us from evil.' (pause for 1 minute)**  
For Yours is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory  
Forever and Ever,  
Amen

No matter how long we've been walking with God we are vulnerable to the temptations of the "Tree of Control" or "Lady Folly". This is why when Jesus teaches his disciples to pray and gives them the prayer that we today call the Lord's prayer or the Our Father he ends with a reminder to pray that God will keep us from temptation and deliver us from evil. As you close your group time, have someone read the Lord's Prayer and when you get to the last two lines leave some space for quiet. During this quiet pause encourage the group to pray for the things mentioned tonight that people in your group are struggling with.

## SLIDE 9

Creekside's Partner Church in Uganda has been affected by COVID19. The Ugandan government issued a strict lockdown of the nation to keep ahead of the spread. So far, officially, there have been no deaths, and the number of infections has been surprisingly low, however the threat is still very real, and as with other nations in Africa, there are limited resources to treat people.

**Please pray for the congregation of the church, and for the children, teachers and staff currently at home due to the closure of God's Gift School.**

Here are updates as of April 16 from Pastor Robert Mukalazi and Shadrach Wanjala, the leaders there:

Robert: Our lockdown was extended by another 21 days, thereby supposed to end on the 5th of May. It's quite a tough time for many families and businesses here. (\*Justine's mother passed away 2 weeks ago, not of the virus, but the family were able to get permission to travel to the funeral service.)

Shadrach: (We) are doing just fine to date and we thank God for his protection and provision. We ask that you keep praying for us and the whole project as well as country. More especially I ask that you pray for my father who is hospitalized in Jinja hospital but not (with) covid 19 but his liver illness that has been disturbing him for a while now.